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27 March 1965

DR. WHEELON:

As a point of interest, while scrambling through the various files on the CORONA issue, I came upon a National Security Council document concerning the U.S. satellite activities which was approved by the President on 10 July 1962. In this document it was recommended by the Council that "the U.S. should not at any time attempt to conduct a truly clandestine program (by which we mean a program with covert and unregistered launchings and public denial that the U.S. is engaged in reconnaissance); however, the U.S. should pursue the research and development for a stand-by capability for clandestine operations in case circumstances ever make such operations necessary."

In the margin along side this recommendation, in someone's unidentified handwriting, possibly Pete Scoville's, there is this notation: "D/NRO assigned this by McNamara, 23 July 1962."

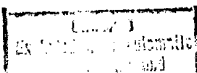
Although we know that Groer through Gorman has been dabbling in various types of research and development satellite efforts and we ourselves tried to get into this activity through the indications satellite or covert satellite program years ago, I wonder if this is some ball which we should pick up and play with; since it is obvious that the NRO has failed to produce the reconnaissance capability in nearly three years.

John N. McMahon

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